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13th September 2024

Dear Ms Walsh

APPLICATION REF. NOS: ZC23/02883/FUL - REMODELLING OF AND EXTENSION TO CANAL GATES/STUDLEY TEA-ROOM

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Thank you for consulting Ripon Civic Society on the revised plans for the above applications.

The Civic Society previously considered that, on balance, the National Trust's proposals to extend the tea-room, remove later structures and improve the visitor entrance to the gardens would improve on the existing arrangements. We welcome that the revised plans reduce the size of the extension and add extra planting. We appreciate that changes were made to the original scheme in response to consultation comments, including from us and consider that these changes have met most of our concerns about the prominence of the new facility.

There are a couple of issues that we still have with the revised plans that we would request are addressed.

The first relates to the interpretation space that is currently shown split into two by a solid wall with part accessed from outside the pay barrier and part from inside it. We believe that this arrangement would hamper circulation and deter visitors from accessing the displays. We there consider that there should be a single large interpretation space with no dividing wall, accessed from outside the pay barrier, that can inform visitors to both the gardens and the wider deer park.

The second issue is the informal picnic area shown in the triangle of grassland beyond the outside seating area. This is very prominent in views of the gardens and we would therefore ask for a condition which prevents tables, chairs and other paraphernalia like umbrellas being placed within this area.

We have also previously expressed concern about the failure of the application to address the need to improve the existing car park, which is a very unsightly feature in the deer park. We appreciate that this is outside the current application but we would still wish to see improvements and welcome that the National Trust is continuing to discuss amelioration measures, including mounding and more sensitive surface materials, with us. We would like to see low-cost measures in the short-term until funding is available for more permanent improvements.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Wigginton

Planning Lead
Ripon Civic Society